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The Age of Scorpius

Audra Winter, Ikram Abdurraziq (Illustrator), Elrose Balan (Illustrator), Joesph Ramirez (Illustrator), Amanda Stewart (Illustrator)
...less

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 1.46 237 ratings · 118 reviews

The Age of Scorpius and its premise became a TikTok sensation in 2021 with over 3.5 million likes and 8 million views. This highly-anticipated YA fantasy debut by Audra Winter is filled with magical mysteries, found family, forbidden powers, and strong, rebellious women. The Age of Scorpius is a unique blend of the sword & sorcery, dystopian, mystery, and romantacy genres, featuring a sapphic protagonist and diverse cast of characters.

Welcome to Gardian, a world where one's zodiac sign determines their magic, fate, and social status.

Eighteen-year-old Rieka Spring has been determined all her life to piece together Gardian's fragmented historical record and reverse her sign's emotionless code of honor. When she finally locates an ancient archive containing classified knowledge of Gardian's history, Rieka discovers a scroll that reveals the existence of a mythological weapon and uncovers the truth behind the Scorpio Code-it's nothing more than a manipulation tactic to keep Scorpio in power.

Violating the Code's "holy orders" is punishable by death, and Rieka's broken the first never show emotion. Unless she wants to be murdered for displaying her anger against the law's will, she must find and prove that a mythological weapon is more than a story before she's killed by the hauntingly familiar assassin sent to stop her.

Genres Fantasy Young Adult High Fantasy

358 pages, Kindle Edition

Published June 30, 2025

This edition

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ASIN	B0F8PPHB5X
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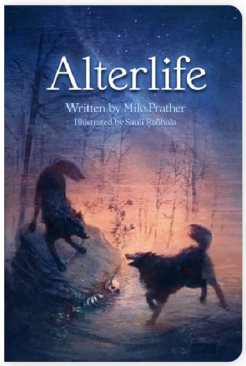

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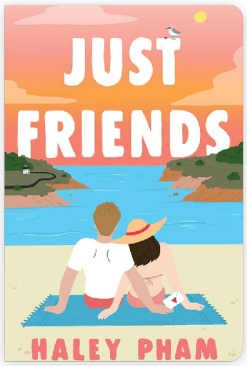

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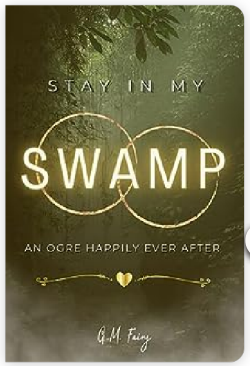

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Zara
1 review
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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ July 7, 2025

Would've been a DNF but I made myself finish it because I wanted to give it an honest shot. To say it was poorly written, poorly developed, and poorly edited would be an understatement. She has even misspelled her OWN made up words. The characters are especially irksome - all flat and flawless with the exception of Avia, who is obnoxious but not nearly as bad as the other characters made her out to be. Kaia comes off like a bully and a busybody for getting involved in Avia and Rieka's sister relationship, though the narrative paints her as righteous and noble. None of them are likeable and for all the author's talk about emotions, nothing these characters feel comes across as earned in any way.

This is why when someone tells you your book isn't ready, you don't just dismiss it because it's not something you want to hear. It's a shame because the concept has potential, but it needed so much more TIME. 10 years of writing means nothing when you were barely a developed individual for most of it. Books that were written by teenagers read like they were written by teenagers, and in this case, The Age of Scorpius reads like it was written by a 12 year old. 10 rewrites or 25, this author's writing never developed beyond the skill of a child. I'm baffled.

While I commend her passion for her project, her success in popularising her book as well as building a fan base before even publishing a single word is her only impressive feat. Perhaps she should consider a career shift to literary marketing.

594 likes • 3 comments

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Reads With Rachel
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6,254 followers

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ August 31, 2025

Oh I'm finally allowed to review this here? Where do I even start

473 likes • 9 comments

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Mallory Raymore
38 reviews
11 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ July 16, 2025

Like other reviews have stated, I followed this author on TT and wanted to support her incredible feat of amassing such a huge fan base for her debut book. According to her, this book took 10 years to develop which meant she started writing it when she was 12. As someone who wrote many stories when she was younger, the entire saga behind this book spoke to me. I really wanted to support Indie.

Unfortunately, the writing is painfully juvenile and left me deeply disappointed. Finishing the book was a chore. As a whole, the concept intrigued me and I respect the amount of work she put into marketing. However, there were a large amount of grammatical errors coupled with terrible sentence structure which made me question if it had been edited. The world building was also flat, heavily info dumped with poor execution, and then repeated in her characters stilted dialogue as well as her narrative. This world is set in a post apocalyptic earth, where characters are armed with both medieval weaponry and watches, and where zodiac magic is introduced at birth. Initially it was intriguing to see how an author may try to turn zodiac stereotypes on their head, but unfortunately the character motivations and characteristics were not unique enough to do so. The societal commentary regarding the code of each zodiac was surface level. The author clearly wanted a tale of “rise against the oppressor” but there were no oppressors nor true dystopian ideas in place.

The characters spoke so unnaturally about their own world it read as though the author wasn’t sure we would get enough world building from the narrative. A narrative that repeated itself often.
For example she begins chapter 2 with: “- though midwinter raged throughout the rest of Gardian, Conviction Woods kept its humid warmth year-round.” Nearly a page later she repeats: “-though midwinter raged throughout the rest of Gardian, Conviction Woods kept its humid warmth all year long.”

There were an unnecessary amount of commas, semi colons, and em dashes that were incorrectly used throughout every sentence, which was jarring and disruptive. Simple words like “merely” and “irresistible” were unusually placed, while other adjectives with similar meanings were doubled up, which indicates there is a misunderstanding of definitions/vocabulary. Other terms/words are repeated to a point where they began to lose meaning, like the aforementioned Conviction Woods. There are misspellings of common words, and misspellings of her own made-up words. All of these errors made this novel appear sloppy, which was genuinely disheartening.

I was so excited to support a book that had beautiful artwork, years of development, and such resounding passion behind it. She has several older videos on TT that refer to this novel as “award winning” on both a state and national level, before it was ever published. I’m leaning towards the possibility that it won awards for her age group, not necessarily in skill or content. Writing a book this size is impressive and I do still commend anyone who publishes their work, especially at such a young age, but for an adult this is a really tough debut.

2025 fantasy

324 likes • 2 comments

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Cee
5 reviews
2 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ August 25, 2025

First and foremost, this is a genuine review from someone who has read the book, cover to cover. This review is for readers, not the author/the author’s team etc.

It’s not good - I think we know that’s the general consensus at this point, but I wanted to write a review to unpack what I think is wrong with it. The writing itself has been analysed to death at this point, so I want to look at the plot and characters because... well, they’re not good either.

Spoilers ahead.

The basic plot; people don’t like Scorpios (they’re not allowed to show emotions, form attachments, or fall in love - the book doesn’t really tell us why). The main girl Rieka knows from the off that something is fishy with the Scorpio code and she suspects that the people are being lied to. By chance she meets Chase (he’s a sentient McGuffin) who just so happens to have seen something that will help Rieka crack the mystery literally the day before meeting her.

(Everything is being engineered behind the scenes, but it doesn’t come out until later and it’s... it’s certainly a thing that happens. TL:DR : their parents are behind it but wanted their children to go on this dangerous quest with no clues or help for reasons.)

They find a scroll that says the Scorpio code is built on a lie, but for plot and adventure reasons, they know that no one will believe the scroll, so they have to find a magical sword (my main question was why did anyone keep the scroll in the first place? The whole book hinges on the fact that someone kept evidence of their crimes.) The Scorpios find out that Rieka and Chase have been in their secret vault, so they go on the run, team up with Rieka’s sister (Avia) and go on a journey to find the sword.

They meet another friend (Kaia - whose name I had to look up because she had no lasting impact) and there is an assassin following them (Narah) who turns out to be Rieka’s ex, only Rieka’s memory has been wiped so she doesn’t remember (a magic ability that doesn’t seem to fit with anything in the story.)

There’s other stuff that goes on, but it’s mostly a point A to point B adventure, where the heroes have to find a McGuffin to save the day. It’s formulaic, and it works in most YA books (The heist in SoC for example), but it doesn’t work here for a lot of reasons.

We’re told at the start that revealing the Scorpio’s lies would start a war, but everyone they come across, instantly believes them and want to see the Scorpio code abolished. (So, why would it lead to war when there are so many non-Scorpios who want things to change? It’s never established how many Scorpios there are vs other zodiac signs but since the Scorpios keep killing people for violating the code, there can’t be that many? It’s a massive plothole.)

At the end we get a reveal that most of the gang are special, and that their parents are also super special immortals. It’s thrown in as a twist but it falls flat because we don’t really spend much time with any of the parent characters anyway? And the ones we did spend time with were happy with their kids going off to die on some dangerous quest.

Speaking of characters...

Rieka is the main character. She can seemingly do no wrong. Whenever she messes up, her friends are there to pick her up and tell her that it’s not her fault, that she’s perfect, and she never has anything to apologise for ever. She nearly kills Chase and he practically apologises to her for it. We were sold on this idea of her being a lesbian and, sure, she is. She has an ex-girlfriend. We have a few flashbacks and they make up in the end. I honestly hate that this is what passes for queer representation these days. The book tries to make out that their relationship is wrong and needs to be kept secret but... of course it does? Rieka is a Scorpio, she’s not allowed to fall in love at all. There isn’t even any actual explanation of how queerness is viewed by wider society in this world, so the forbidden romance thing just adds to the confusion.

Chase is a walking McGuffin. He’s there to ignore everything that happens in favour of talking up Rieka and making sure she knows that she’s the protagonist and the only one who can save the world. Time and time again he reveals some extra special power that helps everyone out (because he’s a Libra Healer?). The book tries to sell us on this idea that there’s tension between him and Rieka (also, this is YA so I don’t even know why they need to make the ‘I’m not going to sleep with you’ comments to each other). The tension isn’t there and the flirting he has with other characters is... juvenile.

Avia is the only character that’s treated differently, but that’s not a good thing. She’s coded as the ‘bully’ character, as Rieka’s older and more capable sister (honestly, how dare she be bigger and stronger through no fault of her own). She’s the worst treated of all the

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territories?? What is she supposed to do? Just go home? She's there for her sister, and it honestly makes me think less of all the other characters because they refuse to acknowledge that.

The book acts as if Rieka is the only person at risk, despite everyone almost dying at least once in the book. But no, okay, Rieka is the only one who's life is at risk because the assassin is only after her (despite Narah attacking Chase too).

Kaia is there because her brother, a gay Scorpio, was killed for being in love (or was he killed for being gay? The book doesn't really say. See what I mean about the queer rep being bad?) but she's over it and decides to join the gang and quickly joins in with the Avia bashing. She's there to flirt with Chase too.

And Narah. She's cursed (the book doesn't explain curses in any meaningful way) and she's angry that Rieka doesn't remember her (only she's the one that helped wipe Rieka's memory, so the angst between them is silly). They fight and argue and the power of Rieka's love saves her which... fine, whatever. It turns out she's Chase's big sister, only their family was cursed (again, I can't stress enough that curses are not explained) so they grew up separated from each other.

So, the found family aspect? That falls short. It's basically a group of people who come together to hype Rieka and dogpile Avia. It's tiring and boring how little chemistry exists between any of them, and it's annoying how Rieka can be selfish and mess up but still be treated like she's the most special snowflake.

The book ends with them claiming the sword and freeing Narah from her curse, staring off into the distance all... now we must return to save the world. Fade to black. Credits roll. Rieka and Narah will return in Age of Scorpius : Endgame.

It's literally just the blurb from the back of the book. You could just read the blurb and you know the basics of what happens.

I also have a few gripes with the world and the fact it's not fleshed out. There's a few paragraphs at the start of the book, that aren't part of the story, that explain that there was a war because of machines and people then gave up machines and discovered magic from the stars (it's giving Dune, only with more magic). This just raises more questions and, frankly, that information should have been in the actual story to build the world.

They don't have machines, but they have showers... with hot water. No explanation there. Is it a magical boiler? A gas boiler? Do they have electricity at all?

And why are they walking literally halfway across the map? Don't they have horses in this world? What even classes as a machine? (It's not fair to compare this to Dune since Dune isn't YA, but Dune at least explains the concept of 'thinking-machines' in depth and how the worlds survive without them after the butlerian jihad e.g by training people to essentially have big brains capable of computation)

In places it feels like information was withheld because the author didn't care to think about it, and other times it feels like it's being kept for Age of Scorpius 2 : Electric Boogaloo. But withholding information vital to world building doesn't work and, at a point, it makes it impossible to engage with any of it. Or, I don't know, I'm not on TT so maybe half of the world building is there. All I can tell you is that it's not in the book where it needs to be.

I like a good magic system but this was not that. It was half explained in bizarre ways. It's not really explained where the magic comes from, how it actually works on a more technical level (like in Grishaverse, we know Inferni cannot produce flame, only manipulate it, and so on). In this book a new magic ability seems to pop up every five minutes when the plot requires it and everyone just shrugs it off and gets on with their day. It's honestly infuriating that the characters within the world interact with it in such an ambivalent way. Rieka nearly kills Chase with her super special magic and no one is the least bit scared of it.

It's just flat. And that's really all I can say about it.

Oh and the romance aspect is also flat. Not because there's no spice but just because it goes so hard on telling you that it's lovers to enemies to lovers thing that, by the end, I honestly didn't care. We don't see enough of Rieka as an actual person to care about her emotional attachments to Narah.

Another thing that's never addressed; star signs are based on when someone is born, so why aren't people planning their pregnancies to avoid signs like Scorpio? And why is is that some people have elemental magic (which is to be expected in zodiac books) but some have weird skills like dreamseeking. And, again, how do curses work because curses feel more like continuous spells rather than tapping into some elemental power or projecting your consciousness into someones dream. I just have so many questions.

And, that's where I'll stop. I didn't care about this book, this story, or these characters - I wasn't given the chance to by the plot or the writing. I hate that it sounds mean, but that's my honest opinion on it.

104 likes • 8 comments

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Sava (Fang Runin's version)
287 reviews
124 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ October 11, 2025

Wtf my review was removed? It was a construct criticism with clear examples from the book so clearly I didn't hate on it just for the sake of it. 😐

58 likes • 5 comments

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Ashley Thorsfeldt
88 reviews
2 followers
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Read November 26, 2025

EDIT: I did finish the book and even read it again, taking my time the second time around. I enjoyed the plot, but it still didn't deliver for me. The writing felt very young and a bit sloppy, more middle grade than YA.

I really wanted to love this book, I mean, I went into it excited. The author promoted it heavily on TikTok, and I was rooting for her, especially knowing how young she is and how long she's been working on it. But unfortunately, it just didn't deliver for me.

The writing felt messy and unpolished. The storyline was all over the place, and I couldn't connect with any of the characters. Even their names were confusing. too similar, which made it hard to keep track. And honestly, I didn't feel any chemistry between them at all. I kept wondering... was this even edited?

There were moments I had to reread pages, thinking I must've misunderstood something. I just couldn't believe this was the same book that had been in development for so many years.

I know a lot of people enjoyed it, and I truly wish I had too.....but this one was not for me 😭. And for me to give a book 1 star? That's extremely rare.

52 likes

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absolutely-not death-of-the-author dnf

50 likes

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Gabbo Parra

Author

32 books

70 followers

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★☆☆☆☆ January 5, 2026

August 25th, 2025

Wow, just wow.

I'm two chapters in, and I understand why so many people are upset about this product.

Still debating whether I should continue to torture myself with this convoluted mess or not, and, yet, there's a perverse part of me that wants to see how much worse this will get.

I mean, how do you start a universe based on Zodiac signs and get the elements (air water fire earth) wrong from the word GO? Not an expert, but I happen to know the fire signs because my brothers and I are those signs. Winter only gets one right. Even if this is intentional, it doesn't read as such surrounded by the amount of poorly conceived things permeating the whole concept.

Let's see how many chapters I can endure.

In the immortal words of Terminator, "I'll be back."

August 28th of our Lord Cthulhu of 2025

I've rarely encountered a tome so dense I ended up with a headache after two chapters. The constant whiplash of concepts, and names, and incongruent locations, and nonsensical babble was too much even for a mind used to characters' voices fighting for attention nonstop. I'm gonna curse a lot because the five chapters I read annoyed me to no end.

You cannot convince me that this "book" isn't merely a first draft that someone decided to simply publish without even a cursory revision. Funny enough, I didn't see any glaring typos or misspelled words; it was everything else. That has to be some metaphysical paradox, when usually what one might collide with in the face of zero editing is alphabetical stillbirths.

The shenanigans begin at the very info-dump-y intro. It tries hard to be poetic in the most insufferably flowery way possible. I mean, imagine you want to say "we fucked up." Three simple words, right? Instead you use twenty words because you're seriously trying not to use the verb FUCK. Euphemisms, metaphors, similes, all to end with THE CENTRAL CONTINENT, whatever the fuck that means because, we will soon learn, it means nothing geographically.

Interestingly these people did not survive a war but seemingly man-induced natural disasters. Somehow, instead of finding a common tongue, they turned to the skies to understand each other. (If you could have seen my face while I was reading that)

We found ourselves intricately woven together by the fates we couldn't see, like the invisible lines connecting the constellations. We paid our respects; we asked what they wished us to do, and they responded. ***"Do not create machines when the stars above have always been within."***

The fuck does that even mean?

Another constant here is the random use of words that sound grand but are either used wrongly or stretching its possible meaning to uncomfortably ridiculous levels. And then going in the opposite direction by dumbing down other words to make them basically null and voided. These survivors decided that THE CENTRAL CONTINENT was their guardian, so they christened this landmass (?) GARDIAN.

Because this book was conceived in the late 2010s, we need districts, sorry, factions, no– that ain't it either; we need some way to separate people to create conflict. Finger snapping. We mentioned the stars (and the sun and moon too!), let's go with the Zodiac. They are twelve, like the districts! And they can be divided into elements (see my comments about that somewhere above). Okay that give us four clusters of three signs, but we gonna get sued if we use them fire air etc. combos, so let's call them some other nonsense. More finger snapping. CONVICTION, ASSIDUOUS, AUTARCHIC, and SOCIETAL. Fuck yeah!

Now, those four words are not made up. But Winter didn't even bother to check their actual meanings because according to the description of each faction in her book, the meanings don't match.

We advanced through the sharing of skill and story from the stars. We divided to function as one society.

Massive eye-roll. And by massive: imagine epic in neon letters.

As I said before, you can stretch shit, that doesn't make it legit. The word "Autarchic" describes something (a country, society, or individual) that is self-sufficient and independent, particularly in economic and political affairs, or characterized by the principle of self-governance and self-rule. Here the AUTARCHIC faction controls/manages/oversees water, healing, and travel; while SOCIETAL controls/manages/oversees light, magic and art. After reading the definition of one word and seeing two management descriptions, you could say, well, none of the descriptions meet the meaning of autarchic, and (when you think about it) societal has to do with society and that could be related to what autarchic means...

We are in the introduction, and already a tingling in the back of my head tells me something is off. Never mind the distribution of the Zodiac signs within the factions. Since the fire signs weren't together in one place, I kindly thought "maybe Winter decided to put one of each in the different factions to create a balance." BUZZER SOUND: NAHHHH. All three Earth signs: Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are in ASSIDUOUS. Even the kindly math ain't mathin' because you have three signs for each element, so the only way to have one of each in some group would be to only have a trio of factions instead of a foursome. I haven't mentioned it yet, but there's magic in this world/universe/mess; and you don't need to know much about magic but even the normies have heard about the power of THREE.

HUMONGOUS missed opportunity, girl. HUGE.

Let's be done with the fucking intro.

Since this block only accepts so many characters, I will continue this long diatribe/exposé on the comments below.

Like and Subscribe, and ring that notification bell for more shit and giggles.

49 likes • 19 comments

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would somehow pick up or get better.

43 likes

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a
128 reviews
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★☆☆☆☆ July 27, 2025

DNF :(
I saw this author on TikTok and she amassed a huge following by hyping up this book. I won't say anything terrible accept mainly for the fact that I couldn't get past chapter 5.
The story starts off very plainly, doesn't capture or keep my attention and is the most repetitive book I've read in a very long time (until I couldn't take it anymore). The term "conviction woods" is about 40% of the first 2 chapters and there's even a repeat sentence in the same chapter.
The first conversation we witness is between two patrollers and it felt so disconnected.
The introduction felt like an info dump without giving much info.
And what I had read, it was very boring.
My opinion is to wait until this is on KU to give it a try if you want to. Because $8 for an ebook that I DNFd is making me sad lol.
I have no interest at all in this book or series.

34 likes • 1 comment

Like Comment •••

sbu_andrew
86 reviews
85 followers
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★★★☆☆ October 15, 2025

Repost of a review that got taken down because, even though by GR's own admission it did not violate any rules, it was "made during a time of unusual activity".

On the immortal soul of Libby Roin, CEO of Goodreads, I certify that this is my honest opinion of a book I legitimately obtained and read in full. Should I be lying and this review be taken down again, so too may Libby Roin be taken to the depths of hell. This oath I do

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28 likes • 5 comments

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Kerrie
Author
58 books
34 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ August 26, 2025

Awful, an embarrassment to the indie writing community, and an affront to readers' trust, consumer protection laws (FTC MITOR), and the craft of writing.

28 likes

Like Comment •••

joan
412 reviews
7 followers
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Want to read August 2, 2025

not gonna lie, the average rating / this being universally hated intrigued me. i know i should stay away from
this but the curiosity is eating me alive. surely, it couldn't be that bad? right??? but then i read the sample and oh my god... it reads like the orc city meme(?) on twitter. now i have to read this. just for the culture or whatever. idk this might be fun (but in a point and laugh way...)

fantasy

26 likes • 4 comments

Like Comment •••

Genuinely Bookish 📚
85 reviews
5 followers
Follow

★☆☆☆☆ August 30, 2025

RE-ADDING MY REVIEW SINCE IT WAS REMOVED.

This was a DNF for me and I was doing great not DNFing books because I like to give them a chance. However, for a visual reader, this book was extremely disorienting and actually gave me tension headaches from having to re-read pages multiple times, it took me longer than 30mins-1hr trying to get through 1 chapter due to all the info dump.

The author claimed breaking rules for lyrical/poetic prose but repeated Conviction Woods 3 times within the first 4 sentences of the book without even attempting to anchor the reader to their surroundings. I got as far as Chapter 6 and still didn't know what Conviction Woods actually looked or felt like.

The dialogue was extremely flat, little to no body movements or emotions. The scenes sometimes felt like I was watching a scratched DVD that would skip forward in awkward moments. This book has a great concept but drastically lacks basic writing skills every author should know. I'm finding out that she kept taking feedback from her artists...not actual fantasy readers.

If you ever wondered what a book looks like written by an author who hasn't read a book in a very long time—this is your example. It read as if the author hadn't picked up a good book since she started this project.

I truly hate to even leave this review because I was genuinely rooting for her, especially as someone aspiring to be an author, but she just made it 10x harder for Indie authors to be taken seriously. She plans to re-released the updated version Spring 2026, however I don't plan to buy it until I see a revised sample this time. She weirdly enough never talked about the writing in her TTs and only ever released a sample on Patreon...where she had less than 100 people signed up meanwhile her large platform of over 150k followers got her hyped up versions with only art as the star of the show or her talking about her "10,000 hours" of writing mastery.

I hope she learned from this and actually applies the good feedback she received, even after she got extremely defensive with her audience after they tried to be kind about the criticism.

did-not-finish

25 likes

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9 reviews
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written dialogue, you are trying to piece together the extremely convoluted Gardian universe. No amount of editing is going to change the fact that the universe is as much of a problem as the writing. I can't even be bothered to list out in detail what is wrong with this book. Instead, here are some beautiful lines straight from the source that really illustrate the joys of reading this one.

"Legend said the Callexus, a mythical sword of immortality, cursed anyone it touched with immortality."
"He became immortal when he touched the Callexus and was punished with its immortality."

"Kaia had taken my clothing to a material shapeshifter somewhere in the village for repair while I showered and rested, assumably to a material shapeshifter somewhere in the village." — Who is a shapeshifter, assumably!

"Hold on, question. I swear to god, the new girl is the most beautiful person I have ever seen in my life. You agree, yes or no?"

"He stared into the flames with an empty stare on his face, completely and entirely drenched with water." — I think this line really encapsulates the written style of writing in this book of written words both beautifully and also gorgeously.

1.5 stars for daring to be a finished book.

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amanita
1 review
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★☆☆☆☆ August 27, 2025

I don't know if I could write a full review for this book, but I wrote down some questions I had from the beginning that only frustrated me as I kept reading. For being a dystopia, I never really get the sense the government is actually threatening in any way as the story does a really poor job of setting this up, bar a gay couple whose first appearance is to immediately get dramatically attacked and dragged away in the Hub because one is a Scorpio, which just kind of stuck out like a sore thumb in the grand scheme of things.

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Gurianthe
1 review
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★☆☆☆☆ October 3, 2025

everyone has already talked about the prose, the grammar mistakes, the plot that cannot be followed, the incredible amount of coincidences and conveniences, the misuse of words, and the most apparent mistakes, so I will use this review to talk about the appalling the misogyny in this book (which I don't think the writer is aware of it)

I have three complaints, all of them relating to the women in Rieka's life. I feel I should give a warning since I will be talking at the sexual assault mentioned in the book, and I mention some light spoilers

•Reika's mom: this character literally has no name and it's HEAVILY implied to have been raped by Blaine (the big bad guy).

By not giving her a name, the reader is meant to understand that this character doesn't matter, and we shouldn't care about her (I think that goes without saying).

I don't have a problem with rape in media, but the way it's handled in this book is simply disgusting. When Rieka's parentage is discussed, Avia wonders if Blaine assaulted their mom, and no other character offers any other possible explanation.

For all the characters know, the encounter could have been 100% consensual but no one even attempts to offer any other explanation. This is the author letting us know that the assault is actually what happened.

I struggle to understand why Audra Winter would have the villain rape the only unnamed female character who is important to the plot. I struggle to understand what she wanted to communicate.

•Avia: Avia only exists to be bullied; she will make reasonable comments ("If you had told me about this earlier, I could have done something about it") and everyone, including characters who have just met her, will ask her to shut up in the most rude way possible and to stop being such a b***h. Audra Winter's words, not mine.

Avia can be curt and insulting at times, but she overall reads as the voice of reason who no one wants to hear; as an older sister who genuinely cares about her younger sister but also deals with emotions she was never taught how to deal with by other means other than roughness. I honestly hope that Audra doesn't have an older sister. I'm not even joking.

•Kaia: Avia's biggest bully is Kaia. Whereas the nameless mother only exists to be source of trauma for Rieka via her constant chastising and disappointment in flashbacks (of which there are MANY), Kaia only exists to be a surrogate mother to Rieka via "comforting" and "giving permission" to Rieka to express herself... which the prose expresses as being a bully at anything Avia says.

That's the entire extend of her character. Kaia is the only person of color in the entire book, and I'm baffled at how bad her character is handled.

I first was offended by Audra Winter's prose in general. I like to consider myself "a creative", and Audra Winter's hubris in publishing her book in such a state is honestly insulting to everyone who dreams of their creative work to be seen by other people but lack the confidence to make it public.

But when I kept reading the book, I was offended as a woman, for the reasons I've described above. This is honestly disgusting to see from a female writer.

20 likes • 1 comment

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Diana Gabriela
10 reviews
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★☆☆☆☆ October 1, 2025

Im side-eyeing the S*** out of those 5 star reviews. You do realize this is a published book right? Not your kids 5th grade creative writing assignment.

19 likes

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Michelle ☽⁺✧.
182 reviews
1 follower

★☆☆☆☆ October 12, 2025

Utterly. Unreadable.
It needs to be rewritten from the ground up.
No amount of line editing can save this.

Persona Picks Book recommendations for (nearly) every type of reader ›

But guess what: this stubborn ass Capricorn is going to keep posting it anyway.

18 likes

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Piper
6 reviews
1 follower
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★☆☆☆☆ January 8, 2026

This review will contain a lot of spoilers, so if you want to avoid them, don't read!!

I went into this book kind of expecting to dislike it, because I don't read a lot of fantasy, and everything I'd heard about it made me think I'd hate it. But after reading it, I have to say, I think there IS a good book in there somewhere. There were parts that I started to really enjoy and get into, but those parts would then be followed by one of the many issues that plagued this book, and it would ruin it

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Jacob Levy
115 reviews
24 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ September 30, 2025

Apparently, my review for this train wreck got taken down, and I didn't even notice lmao.

Anyways, here it is again:
I'd like to start by apologizing to every book I have ever given 1 star to, even you don't deserve to be lumped in with this travesty. I would hesitate to even call this a book. It was more of a test of my sanity and patience, where every sentence made me confront that time is limited in life and this is what I'm choosing to do with it.

16 likes • 1 comment

Like Comment •••

Abigail
334 reviews
39 followers
Follow

★☆☆☆☆ October 1, 2025

People who don't understand astrology shouldn't write books inspired by it. It always reads weird and contradicts all the signs archetypes. This was poorly written but greatly marketed.

16 likes

Like Comment •••

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aarthi 🗡🐉
162 reviews
9 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ October 11, 2025

where do i start?

well first things first, tolkien did not die for this. poor man is probably rolling in his grave right now, but that's besides the point.

the first time i heard of the age of scorpius, and audra winter was when the early reviews were being published. initially i thought it was bizarre that people wanted to return the book after reading it. since typically when you dislike a book you review it and you donate it or sell it.

then the drama surrounding this book became more noticeable. me being the nosy person i am decided to do a deep dive, and also finally decided to read the book. the masses were not lying.

in all aspects, this book is abysmal. was this book even edited at least once? or was the first draft published?

the prose is insipid—it's just words put together with no fluidity (the amount of times the author kept misusing words). the number of grammatical, and spelling errors (the author misspells their own made up words) in the e-book copy. even the synopsis on here has errors ("romantacy"). too much repetition. the dialogue reminds me of fourth wing which is very wattpad esque and egregious to read through because it constantly shatters immersion.

the world-building was a concept that i would have come up with when i was twelve too: "welcome to gardian, a world where one's zodiac sign determines their magic, fate, and social status." now look i'll be a little nice here and say that there could have been slight potential that could have been built upon on but that didn't happen. instead the magic system, the politics, the setting, and etc. in regards to the world were barely rudimentary.

the characterization was shallow. they were all uninteresting, and therefore obnoxious to read about. not compelling at all. no chemistry in the platonic or romantic relationships amongst the characters.

the plot? what plot? instead of "where is waldo?" lets play "where is the plot of the age of scorpius?"

moving on, now i don't believe in senselessly hating on an author (unless they're problematic) but i will critique their actions if i want to. audra winters said she had been working on this book for ten years, yet she made zero effort to change the teenage writing of her book. she may be in her 20s but the book still reads as if it was written by a 12 year old. she claimed to have rewritten it multiple times but it is jarring how the writing hasn't developed at all. there was more effort spent into making it the next "indie fantasy sensation" on booktok. she boasted about how it was being edited by her idol's publisher (apparently she said it was the same editor for THG, and it turned out to be a lie), and how "the world of gardian llc is a multimedia creative studio with a team of 20+ illustrators, musicians, animators, and designers." i don't know if this next statement are true but i heard she has yet to refund many of the preorders of the first edition.

now even after everything, the criticism has been disregarded by her, and she is blaming her old editor instead of taking accountability like an adult. she says she's now focusing on a second revision and claimed it isn't for the money but increases the price? look the arrogant attitude just shows she likes the idea of being a writer instead of actually being a writer. there is no passion, and it seems purely entrepreneurial. i want to sympathize because i know this is a writer's worst nightmare but the lack of humility is lamentable.

my one stars are as rare as my five stars (because a book has to be truly atrocious for me to give it one star) but this book has earned it.

lgbtq-fiction not-favorites young-adult-fantasy

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grace
66 reviews
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★★☆☆☆ August 25, 2025

pre read: i am SO excited for this book - i have wanted to read it since 2021 and have been following it since and i cannot wait to see this world unfold!!!

immediate post read: 4.25 ⭐ - this book ATE it UPPPPP - the drama, the world building, the characters, found family aspect, queer love, i will say - this book does definitely lean YA, so people need to be prepared for that and definitely the writing style reflects this too!! however i cannot wait for the progress of this series!!!

post read: a month later- as i sit on this more and more i think it's more of a 3 star book maximum (2.5 star specifically but im rounding down lol) i don't know i think there was a lack of depth that i didn't see the first time, i think in hindsight i loved this book so much because the author did - i hope the writing gets better because i will be continuing the series!

2025

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taranis
29 reviews
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★☆☆☆☆ September 29, 2025

This is what happens when you choose to buy a book based off 'tropes' and 'vibes'.

13 likes

Like Comment •••

Kareem
19 reviews
1 follower
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★★☆☆☆ October 30, 2025

This is obviously not a good book. In fact, it's the most poorly written book I've ever read, especially the first chapter. That's all been covered, though, and I have nothing to add that hasn't already been said many times over. Besides, I don't rate on how well a book is written, I rate on enjoyment.

If I'm being honest, I was originally looking at 3 stars for this book. I didn't hate it, and I didn't dislike it either. Was it hard to parse what was happening sometimes? Sure. Did the power system ever properly get explained? Nope. Were scenes cohesive such that I could consistently follow what was happening at any given point? No. But occasionally I would read something that, once I focused hard enough to piece together what the author was trying to say, I felt I could dynamically visualize in a way that I thought was cool and fun. Yeah, I didn't like the book, but I didn't dislike it either.

But obviously, this isn't a 3 star review. This is a 2 star review. I came to dislike the book by the halfway point, and toward the end I almost came to hate it, and it was all because of the narration's treatment of a single character: Avia.

Avia is not a character I consider special. She's a stock standard cutout of the sarcastic fighter archetype. She's the older sister of the main character, Rieka. She pokes fun at the events around her and treats the situations she finds herself in with a certain amount of levity that eases tension in a scene. Otherwise, she's impulsive and big on taking action. For these qualities alone, I would normally not consider her anything to write home about, and her character would be just another character in the story.

But the narration and all the characters must know something about Avia that we don't. Rieka is constantly snapping at Avia for saying generally sensible things. She consistently expresses anger and distrust toward her sister. The other characters in the story seem to all be completely done with Avia the first time she ever opens her mouth, and besides the occasional playful banter one would expect from a sibling, Avia is not shown to ever have said or done anything deserving this treatment.

Rieka gets irate whenever Avia speaks her mind. Chase disapprovingly rebukes her if Avia says anything to Rieka that implies she isn't made of glass and isn't fragile enough to break into a thousand pieces if she isn't either complimented or soothed. Kaia weaponizes therapy speak to make it sound like Avia is constantly terrorizing Rieka and tearing at her self esteem. The narration consistently finds time to sideline, berate, and admonish her disproportionately for the most minor infractions, and sometimes when she is not at fault or has yet to say or do anything at all.

I found myself becoming more protective of what would otherwise have been a forgettable character simply because the narration and other characters come off as hating her for things she is not. This came to a head in the last few pages of the book when Avia gives a light-hearted summary of recent events and is left with the rest of the main characters yelling her down for her vitriolic ways, hating her for not being trustworthy enough for her sister to confide in her. With the context that Avia is repeatedly the first person to put life and limb on the line for Rieka, has never broken her confidence (unlike her other companions), and is consistently the last to know any critical information? It rings hollow.

Anything further I have to say on the subject falls out of the scope of what I believe a Goodreads review ought to hold. I will end with this: if you are seeking a well written book or a cohesive book, this isn't for you.

13 likes

Like Comment •••

Cameron Buck
3 reviews
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★☆☆☆☆ August 29, 2025

I cannot roll my eyes hard enough.

I was wavering between 1.50 to 2 stars at first because to be truthful I was intrigued by the story. Until I got to the middle. They spend chapters upon chapters just walking, talking, and sleeping. The fights are so lackluster, they lack any sort of urgency. I wasn't worried for a second that anything would go bad. Because the fights last like 2 sentences until somebody pulls some bullshit power out of their ass and they win/Reika passes out or somebody almost dies. Chase is a healer so there's no worry about somebody succumbing to a bad injury.

I can feel the love Audra has for this universe and sadly it does not come out in the writing. It reads very juvenile, and not in a good way.

I only really stuck around for the same reason that you'd stick around watching a very bad movie, I was entertained.

14 likes

Like Comment •••

★☆☆☆☆ October 11, 2025

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romantasy

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Ona
78 reviews
2 followers
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★☆☆☆☆ August 29, 2025

I'm sorry this is unreadable

11 likes

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